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Viewing cable 09BOGOTA1412, DAS DOMESTIC SPYING SCANDAL DEEPENS

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Understanding cables

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BOGOTA1412	2009-05-04 19:50	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.elespectador.com/wikileaks>

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #1412/01 1241950
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041950Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8548
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 8833
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 2141
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY 0087
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 7449
RUEHQH/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 8185
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0787
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 001412

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: DAS DOMESTIC SPYING SCANDAL DEEPENS

REF: 09BOGOTA569

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer
Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Colombia's leading newsmagazine "Semana" broke new details on domestic spying by the Department of Administrative Security (DAS), alleging the DAS maintained an extensive illegal surveillance program against GOC opponents and Supreme Court magistrates. "Semana" claims the DAS has had a unit dedicated to domestic spying since 2004, and also alleges high-ranking DAS officials met with top Uribe advisors Bernardo Moreno and Jose Obdulio Gaviria to discuss sensitive cases. The advisors deny such meetings, but we have heard from numerous sources that Moreno and Gaviria pushed the DAS to engage in political spying. Prosecutor General (Fiscal General) Mario Iguaran has vowed to get to the bottom of the scandal, but the GOC may use the selection of his replacement--Iguaran departs in July--to limit the investigation's scope. End Summary

DAS REVELATIONS CONTINUE

¶2. (U) Leading newsmagazine "Semana" broke new details on domestic spying by the Department of Administrative Security (DAS). According to the April 27 article, the preliminary findings of investigations by CTI, the investigative unit of

the Fiscalia (Prosecutor General), and the Procuraduria (Inspector General) suggest the DAS maintained a systematic surveillance program against GOC opponents--as well as some allies. The surveillance was much more widespread than originally thought (ref A). Citing anonymous Fiscalia sources, "Semana" claims that in the last five years, the DAS monitored Vice President Santos, former President Gaviria, CNP Commander Naranjo, and former DAS head Penate--among others. Fiscal General Mario Iguaran did not publicly confirm the details, but said the initial findings were worrying.

¶3. (C) CTI investigators reportedly found evidence that since 2004, the DAS had a unit dedicated to spying on groups and individuals considered a threat to the GOC. Originally known as the "G-3" group, the unit did not officially exist and reported only to the DAS director or the deputies in charge of intelligence and counterintelligence. "Semana" reported that besides numerous leftist groups and politicians, the G-3 also collected information on Supreme and Constitutional Court magistrates, Colombian Army officials, and their relatives. The unit was disbanded in late 2005 after a similar domestic spying scandal, but the article claims DAS continued domestic spying through the "National and International Group for Observation and Verification" (GONI) set up in 2006. Local journalist XXXXXXXXXXXXX told us former DAS sub-director Jose Narvaez was behind the original domestic espionage operation and continued to control GONI after his departure from the DAS in 2005.

¶4. (C) "Semana" also alleges that former DAS deputy intelligence chief Fernando Tabares told investigators he and former DAS deputy chief of counterintelligence Jorge Lagos met several times with Presidential Secretary Bernardo Moreno and then-presidential advisor Jose Obdulio Gaviria to discuss controversial spying cases. (NOTE: Both Tabares and Lagos resigned in the wake of the February scandal). The meetings allegedly took place in the Casa de Nariño. Moreno publicly said he had spoken with Tabares once about routine DAS matters, but denied ever meeting Lagos. Former DAS director Maria del Pilar Hurtado contradicted Moreno in a May 4th follow-up interview in "Semana," saying both Tabares and Lagos had discussed DAS business with Moreno in his office. For his part, Gaviria said Tabares was either lying or mistaken about the meetings. Former DAS director Penate told us in February that Moreno and Gaviria had pressured him to keep DAS involved in domestic espionage.

WHO LET THE DAS OUT?

¶5. (U) Still, it is unclear who ultimately ordered the domestic surveillance. The original article reports that Hurtado, who resigned last November in a related domestic surveillance scandal, signed orders requesting sensitive financial information on Supreme Court justices and their families. Mario Aranguren, who resigned last week as the head of the GOC's Financial Intelligence Unit (UIAF), told "Semana" that Lagos was the DAS official who had requested the financial information and that he notified Hurtado in writing every time the UIAF responded to Lagos requests.

¶6. (U) Hurtado denied ordering any surveillance on Court members during her tenure, but said Moreno had asked the DAS to investigate a magistrate due to his alleged ties to narcotraffickers. The investigation turned up nothing. Iguaran said the Fiscalia is committed to identifying those responsible ordering for the spying, adding that he is less interested in charging the low-level personnel who carried out the surveillance. He signaled the Fiscalia is prepared to offer judicial benefits for those who provide information on the issue.

¶7. (U) President Uribe has steadfastly denied any involvement, saying from Spain that the DAS scandal had become a "stain" on his democratic security policies. Still, former President Gaviria strongly denounced Uribe over the scandal, citing what he called Uribe's failure to condemn the actions and asserting that the rule of law in Colombia has broken down. Opposition Senator Gustavo Petro--a frequent target of DAS surveillance--directly accused Uribe of being responsible for the surveillance and said he and Senator Hector Eli Rojas would travel to Washington to file a complaint directly with OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza.

NEXT STEPS

¶8. (C) The CTI investigation leaked to "Semana" was only a preliminary report. Iguaran conceded that investigating those responsible will be a difficult task, but said he was determined to use his final three months in office to pursue the investigation. Inspector General (Procurador) Alejandro Ordóñez said his office had opened investigations on 16 current or former DAS officials--including Hurtado, Tabares, and Lagos--based on the preliminary CTI report. DAS director Felipe Muñoz announced the closing of GONI and the dismissal of at least 33 DAS officials. Few of these however, had anything to do with the domestic spying scandal, and it appears that the moment for Muñoz to undertake serious structural reform at DAS has passed. XXXXXXXXXXXXX doubted the Fiscalia's investigation would go beyond Hurtado, noting that the GOC would use the choice of the next Fiscal to limit the investigation's scope. Under the Constitution, the President

submits three candidates to the Supreme Court, which then
selects one to be the Fiscal.
BROWNFIELD